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Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

397th Meeting
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Geneva

Chairman: Mr. Hohenfellner . . . . . (Austria)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Organization of work

The Chairman: This afternoon we will continue and conclude agenda item 3, "General exchange of views". Upon completion of the general debate, we will immediately begin our consideration of agenda item 4, "Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes". I urge all delegations wishing to speak on this item to inscribe their names on the list of speakers as soon as possible.

General exchange of views *(continued)*

Mr. Sánchez (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Allow me to join those who have taken the floor before me to congratulate you on your election to the chairmanship of this Committee. My delegation is certain that under your experienced guidance, and with the ever-constructive participation of the Office for Outer Space Affairs and the capable and distinguished delegations present here, we shall achieve the objectives set out for this important session.

I wish also to express my delegation's satisfaction at the fact that this session of the Committee is being held in this beautiful and hospitable city. We are convinced that the professionalism and expertise which have always marked the work of this excellent United Nations Office will be of considerable help in work related to space activities.

My delegation is pleased and honoured to address this Committee at its thirty-seventh session; we continue to do so as an Observer.

For more than 10 years now, Cuba has been involved in United Nations activities for the peaceful uses of outer space, participating in this Committee and its corresponding Scientific and Technical and Legal Subcommittees. Cuba took a very active part in UNISPACE 82; in 1990, Havana was host to a regional United Nations workshop on space communications for development; and in 1992, an international seminar, "Results of a Study of the Earth by Aerospace Means", was held in Havana as well, and was organized as Cuba's contribution to the activities of International Space Year.

Cuba also took an active part in the first and second Space Conferences of the Americas, which were successfully held in Costa Rica and Chile in recent years.

In conformity with the importance attached by our Government to space activities, our country created the Cuban Commission on the Peaceful Exploration and Use of Outer Space which, since the 1980s, has been coordinating the efforts of more than 20 institutions and bodies across the nation in the development and use of space research.

Cuba is among the few third-world countries which has developed scientific equipment for space research, many types of which have already been used satisfactorily, while others have passed rigorous tests and will soon be operational.

In short, Cuba has a broad range of activities and participates in national and international space projects. Therefore, while aware of the interest expressed by other States, my Government feels able to reiterate its wish - stated over the past five years - to become a member of

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this Committee. Our presence would contribute to broadening cooperation for better and more effective exploration and peaceful use of outer space.

My delegation fully shares the opinion of most countries that the international community has the right and the responsibility to participate in drawing up norms and regulations governing cooperation in the peaceful use of outer space for the benefit of all States. Legal norms, along with other understandings and means of cooperation, should ensure the application of the principles of sovereignty and non-interference in the affairs of States, as well as the right of all peoples to free and independent development.

It is in that light that we have been attentively following the current work and the progress achieved with respect to the set of Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space. As well as being a developing country, Cuba is in a particular geographical position, which is why we are especially concerned about the consequences of the uncontrolled re-entry of objects with nuclear power sources on board, and about possible failures during launching or the early stages of flight.

My delegation believes that the question of the definition and delimitation of outer space should be resolved in accordance with the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies. We continue to view the geostationary orbit as a limited natural resource over which no State or group of States can exercise sovereignty to the detriment of others.

We think it extremely important that the spin-off benefits of space technology should promote increased non-discriminatory international cooperation, with greater account being taken of the needs and interests of developing countries.

We were pleased by the work of the Scientific and Legal Subcommittee during its thirty-first and thirty-third sessions; its recommendations will prove extremely useful for the work of the Committee.

With respect to the holding of a third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, my delegation once again states its commitment to cooperate as best it can to ensure that it is successfully held in a developing country. We believe that the conference should devote special attention to, among other items of paramount importance, the link between outer space, the environment and development.

I conclude by expressing my country's readiness to cooperate with United Nations work in this field and, in research related to the study of outer space and its peaceful use, to establish ties of cooperation and collaboration with all countries and organizations addressing this rich resource of mankind.

Mr. Argüello (Nicaragua) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: I wish to begin, Sir, by saying how pleased my delegation is to see you once again in the Chair for this session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. I wish also to convey our appreciation to the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, Mr. Jasentuliyana.

I take the opportunity of this general exchange of views to make some brief observations from the viewpoint of an observer country. My delegation believes that developing countries, lacking advanced technology, must not be kept isolated from information and knowledge on outer space. Nor are they in a position to do without the benefits of space science and technology.

As a tropical country with an extremely fragile ecosystem, prone to frequent natural disasters, Nicaragua needs scientific and technical information relating to our country's circumstances - information that is handled through this Committee. I am thinking first and foremost of meteorology; of telecommunications as applied to remote education programmes; of the use of satellite data to study soil erosion and degradation, deforestation, climate change and changes in rainfall patterns; and other spin-off benefits of space technology.

This is a question not solely of sharing technology, but also of not becoming a victim of that technology, as recently happened in my country. It has been reported that foreign pirate vessels with satellite-guided navigation systems enter Nicaragua's Atlantic and Pacific territorial waters by night, to steal our maritime resources. That is an example not merely of not sharing technology, but of using technology to harm countries lacking it.

My delegation states Nicaragua's continued interest in the expansion of this Committee on the basis of regional balance, which would give additional countries - one of which could be Nicaragua - the opportunity to participate fully in the Committee's discussions.

My delegation supports the activities of several members of the Committee with a view to convening, as soon as possible, a third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE-3), and, as the General Assembly recommended in its resolution 48/39, preferably holding it in a third-world country. This position has the support of the Group of 77 and of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

My country joins others in calling for increased international cooperation in space technology. As you suggested in your opening statement, Mr. Chairman, the practical benefits of space technology and its applications must provide concrete benefits to all countries. Like the sea beyond territorial maritime shelves, outer space is the heritage of mankind, not of a small group of States.

Paradoxically, outer-space technology particularly affects the poor and the rural sectors of developing countries. Those sectors, unaware of the debates in this room and even of the existence of this Committee, have a close relationship with the skies: their sowing patterns are governed by the phases of the moon, the tides. They are the first to notice the negative consequences of environmental deterioration; they are the most vulnerable to sudden climatic changes; and they are the ones who would benefit most from the use of space monitoring as applied to agriculture.

There is no justification for denying the benefits of space activities to those sectors, especially when such technology leads to greater agricultural yields, more timely awareness of impending risks and dangers, and a greater awareness of our common responsibility towards our planet.

Mr. Velázquez (Peru) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: Allow me first of all, Mr. Chairman, to join those who have spoken before me in expressing congratulations to you, and I extend those congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

I also thank you for giving me this opportunity to address the members of the Committee, since I wish to apprise them of the great importance my Government attaches to the subject of Peru's joining COPUOS.

As this is the first session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to be held since its relocation in Vienna, preceded by the sessions of its two Subcommittees in which Peru participated as an observer, I would have been very pleased to review the activities and actions undertaken by my country in the field of the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes. However, I shall refer only briefly to some of Peru's activities in this field.

Peru is doing important work in the area of space activities, particularly through the National Commission for Aerospace Research and Development (CONIDA), and the Peru Geophysical Institute. In its 20 years of existence, CONIDA has achieved international recognition for its work in promoting remote sensing technology through its training programmes.

Peru has also been using geostationary satellites as a means of retransmission to ensure national coverage. It uses modern techniques for television broadcasting, telephone communications and data transmission. Since the 1980s, Peru has also been conducting experiments on education via satellite.

We also wish to recall the activities my country has undertaken in the use of unmanned scientific satellites, particularly in the fields of meteorology, navigation, geodesy and spatial photography.

Further, in the field of outer space study, since the 1960s we have been carrying out space research with ground-based instruments. Peru's Jicamarca radio observatory, which has been developing techniques for the study of inner space through radar and, has made important contributions in this area. The Ancón and Huancayo observatories have also made significant contributions in ionospheric physics, using satellite radio-receivers and studying the effects of the ionosphere and its irregularities in the propagation of the signals they emit (scintillations and Faraday rotation). The Punto Lobos base installations 60 km. south of Lima and near the magnetic equator have made it possible to carry out international cooperation projects with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the Max Planck Institute and North American universities, as was done in the Antarqui, Equion, Castor, 6687 and Condor Projects.

The activities carried out by the various specialized institutions and universities, as well as the recent establishment of the National Centre for Training in Space Science and Technology, will make it possible to continue strengthening national programmes for research, development and use of space technologies.

I should also like to mention that my country's active participation in Latin America and the Caribbean in matters related to outer space has made it possible for Peru to be selected as host of the Third Regional Workshop and Seminar on the use of satellite data on natural resources, which is to be held in Lima next October.

Peru is firmly convinced that progress of this kind in space technology should be reflected in an active representation by country in the specialized international bodies dealing with this important subject. That is why we hope that Peru's request to join the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space will be favourably received.

Mr. Boutos (Greece): Since this is the first time I have taken the floor, I should like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, for guiding the deliberations of this Committee in your usual outstanding manner.

I wish I did not have to speak at this time, but the statement of the representative of France this morning prompts me to clarify certain points. In his statement the French representative asked which countries were the new candidates for membership of COPUOS and, answering his own question, said that he saw only Spain and the Republic of Korea, both of which had his support.

It is in this context that I should like to remind the French representative that Spain, together with Portugal, Turkey and Greece, are all full members of COPUOS and, following a gentleman's agreement in 1980, alternate in pairs in the two seats available to them. Their full membership has been legally and conclusively established, as has their request to become permanent members of this Committee when the next enlargement of COPUOS occurs. Their requests have equal force and, indeed, the Chairman of the Committee and the Secretariat, both in New York and in Vienna, have taken full cognizance of the fact and are acting accordingly.

Not only were we therefore very unpleasantly surprised to hear that the speaker, who represents a fellow member of the European Union, mention only Spain's candidature among the four rotating countries, but also that he considers Spain's request to be on the same basis as the request of the Republic of Korea for new membership.

I should like to add that my country's request for a permanent seat has on numerous occasions been submitted in written form both to the President of the General Assembly as well as to the Chairmen of the Group of Western European and Other States, and has also been incorporated in the records of this Committee.

Furthermore, the Chairman of COPUOS has expressly stated that there is no need for the submission of additional documents to this effect.

In closing I should like to reiterate my country's position on this matter - which is that we cannot accept any move towards enlargement that does not restore the permanent membership of all four countries at the same time, a position which is shared by our partners in COPUOS that are in the same situation as Greece.

The Chairman: May I remind representatives that at this stage we are conducting the general debate. The question of enlargement will be taken up under agenda item 9, "Other matters". This does not in any way, of course, interfere with the right of representatives to make statements. But I should like to recall at this stage, before we encounter a possible specification of the general debate - which I would not accept because I am strictly abiding by the logic that we should keep the agenda items as they are - that we will come to the question of enlargement under agenda item 9.

Mr. Sölendil (Turkey): I wished to make a clarification on the same issue as my Greek colleague. Since the Chairman has stated that this matter will be discussed under agenda item 9 - which was our intention to do so from the outset - I shall refrain from addressing it at this stage.

The Chairman: The representative of Turkey has set an example in discipline, and I commend him. Under "Other matters", we shall take up, *inter alia*, matters of enlargement and the future organization of work. I have, of course, listened attentively to all statements made so far, but I would urge members to adhere to the principle that we should follow the agenda items.

I now call on the representative of the International Astronautical Federation (IAF).

Mr. Ortner: On behalf of the President of the International Astronautical Federation (IAF), Alvaro Azcarraga, I am pleased and honoured to present a short summary of the activities of the IAF, concentrating in particular on the question of cooperation with developing countries.

At present, the IAF comprises 125 member societies from 45 nations. It can be considered as the worldwide umbrella society for space agencies, space societies and industrial companies active in space. Great efforts are being made to further invite institutions from developing countries to become members of the Federation.

After the most successful Congress of the IAF in Graz, Austria, last October, the next Congress will be held in Jerusalem, Israel, from 9 to 14 October this year. As in past years, a special workshop will be devoted to the needs of developing countries on the theme "Benefits of Space Technology for the Developing World - from Economic Growth to Environmental Protection". This workshop will be co-sponsored by the United Nations, the European Space Agency and the Commission of the European Communities. The IAF Committee for Liaison with International Organizations and Developing Nations, under the chairmanship of Professor U. R. Rao, is the driving force behind IAF's activities in promoting cooperation between industrialized and developing countries.

The IAF is working closely together with COSPAR in preparing special symposia, which are held in conjunction with the sessions of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. The recent symposium on "Space Applications for Disaster Prevention, Warning, Mitigation and Relief" proved very successful. For next year's session, a symposium on "Application of Space Technology for education" is being prepared for 21 and 22 February 1995. Since the move of the Office for Outer Space Affairs to Vienna, the Austrian Space Agency is coordinating these events.

As part of its efforts to promote the study and development of space law, the IAF created the International Institute of Space Law (IISL) in 1960. Since then, the IISL, now presided over by our Secretary, the head of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, Nandasiri Jasentuliyana, has maintained close ties with the Legal Subcommittee of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Its efforts in this area include the annual organization of a symposium on a particular aspect of space law during the session of the Legal Subcommittee. The theme of this year's session, organized in cooperation with the European Centre for Space Law, was "Legal Questions Regarding Commercial Activities in Space". We are pleased that this session was useful to all delegations.

In conjunction with the IAF Congress, the IISL holds annual colloquiums on the Law of Outer Space. The 1994 Colloquium will focus on new legal developments in satellite communications, definitional issues in space law, liability in commercial space activities and other legal matters related to the peaceful uses of outer space. The 1995 Colloquium will be held in Oslo, Norway, during the forty-sixth IAF Congress.

The IISL also has many working groups, through which it carries out important work in the field of space law. The work of one such group which is of particular interest to this Committee is that of the Working Group on the Definitional Issues in Space Law, under the chairmanship of Professor Gorove, who is present at this session. It has begun consideration and clarification of certain basic legal concepts and terms which appear in the space agreements drafted by this Committee.

Finally, let me point out that the IAF will be pleased to continue preparing the annual reports on highlights in space technology for the United Nations and providing all necessary support to this Committee.

The Chairman: I should like to express my gratitude to the IAF and COSPAR, both of which have helped us greatly in organizing the symposiums of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, and which will continue doing so in the future.

This brings us to the conclusion of our consideration of agenda item 3, "General exchange of views". I should like to commend the Committee on the fact that 40 countries participated this year, which is better than last year in New York, when 35 countries made statements under this agenda item. I say this because it shows that representatives followed my recommendation to use the conference facilities as much as possible under the specific agenda items.

Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes

Mr. Zaman (Pakistan): The question of the militarization of outer space was first included on the Committee's agenda for its consideration at its twenty-seventh session, in June 1984. Thereafter, starting with the twenty-eighth session of the Committee, in June 1985, the title of the item was changed to "Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes". We have thus been discussing this agenda item, to try to find means to keep outer space for peaceful purposes only, for 11 years. It is interesting to note that in that time considerable progress has been registered on almost all the items on the agenda of the Committee as well as of its two

Subcommittees, but no progress whatsoever has been made in our Committee on this agenda item. The various delegations reaffirm their positions year after year, resulting in an inconclusive debate.

There is no denying the fact that it is in this Committee that all matters pertaining to the uses of outer space are discussed, negotiated and formulated into treaties. In view of the seriousness of the "weaponization" of outer space, other United Nations Committees, such as the Special Political Committee and the Conference on Disarmament, also deal with this subject. But that does not undermine the work of this Committee. As we all know, several space treaties have been formulated so far under United Nations auspices, including the 1967 outer space treaty; the rescue Agreement of 1968; the liability Convention of 1972; the registration Convention, of 1976; the Moon Agreement of 1979. Subsequently, a number of drafts of new treaties, as well as several amendments to the outer space Treaty and the registration Convention, in the form of additional Articles or Protocols, have been proposed and discussed at the Conference on Disarmament in the past decade or so.

In view of the fact that there is increasing interest in achieving greater transparency in space activities, as a constructive step towards the prevention of an arms race in outer space, a number of new measures have been advanced to foster the dissemination of knowledge on the various technical problems and to prepare the political basis for proper negotiations. These include the conducting of a study on specific aspects related to the application of different confidence-building measures in outer space, finalized last year by a study group of Government experts.

Representatives will also recall that a number of proposals have been submitted to the United Nations General Assembly, to this Committee and to the Conference on Disarmament about possible institutional arrangements for monitoring and verifying any agreement on outer space. All these efforts speak for themselves about humankind's eagerness to avoid the "weaponization" of outer space, because this is not a problem only for a State or States; it is a problem for all humankind. Let us face the various issues involved in this respect boldly and, bearing in mind the optimum use of the precious time available to our Committee, try to make substantial progress in the matter. For that purpose, we will have to evolve a strategy for formulating some terms of reference to initiate a constructive discussion on the various issues involved. This is perhaps the only way, in my delegation's view, and one which, hopefully, will lead us to an agreeable solution to the various problems.

Mr. Muñoz Ledo (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The end of the cold war and the suspension of the Strategic Defense Initiative, commonly known as Star Wars, has created auspicious conditions for the evolution of negotiations among the major space powers to reach a rapid agreement on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. In this context, we should recall that the General Assembly, faced with the little progress that has been made, appealed, through resolution 48/74, to the Russian Federation and the United States to resume negotiations for that purpose.

The Mexican delegation believes that the continued discussion of this priority subject in the Committee has not produced significant progress in preserving outer space for peaceful purposes. This situation is not in keeping with the spirit of General Assembly resolution 48/39, which urges all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations has submitted a report on international cooperation in space activities for enhancing security in the post-cold-war era, in which he proposes to broaden international cooperation in the area by revitalizing existing mechanisms and by producing new cooperation mechanisms as well. Among the proposals to establish innovative approaches for cooperation in space and security, the Mexican delegation attaches particular importance to confidence-building measures and improvement of access to space technology, both of which fall within this Committee's area of competence.

The Mexican delegation believes that implementation of the Secretary-General's recommendations in this respect will necessarily require greater coordination of activities among the various bodies of the United Nations. One essential step is to promote a communication and coordination link between the work of the Committee, designed to ensure the peaceful use of outer space, and the activities of the Conference on Disarmament, designed to prevent an arms race.

My delegation would recall the fact that the need for coordination between the Committee and what was then the Disarmament Commission was recognized by the General Assembly in paragraph 15 of its resolution 38/80. However, this aspiration has not been translated into a

reality over the last 10 years, which can be explained by the context of the cold war. In the current situation, which appears to be one of greater understanding, the revitalization and coordination of work by the different bodies of the United Nations would be a natural response to the need to increase transparency and strengthen cooperation within the international community.

In the study by the Group of Governmental Experts to Undertake a Study on the Application of Confidence-Building in Outer Space, contained in document A/48/305 of 15 October 1993, different areas of cooperation are identified, to which my delegation would like to draw the Committee's attention. In paragraph 329 of that report, it is noted that, given the dual-use nature of some space technologies and the international character of the relevant issues discussed in the context of the prevention of an arms race in outer space and of the peaceful uses of outer space, the possibility of establishing working contacts between the Conference on Disarmament and COPUOS should be explored and appropriate actions considered by the General Assembly to encourage such contacts.

Also, in paragraph 322, the study recommends that the Legal Subcommittee, within its mandate concerning the international legal regime governing activities in outer space, continue to keep under review the Convention on the Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space with respect to staying abreast of technological development and the possible need for ensuring greater transparency and predictability in space operations.

In parallel, the discussions held and the proposals made recently in the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of the Arms Race in Outer Space relating to confidence-building measures in space activities reflect, from that Committee's point of view, the need to establish working relationships with this Committee. Indeed, at its 15 March meeting, that Committee considered a proposal which identified the subjects of space debris and nuclear power sources in outer space as areas where the work of the two bodies coincides and which deserve greater cooperation.

Given these points, the Mexican delegation would like to state that this Committee, through its scientific, technical and legal work, has an important role to play with a view to ensuring that space is maintained for peaceful purposes, and could be in a position to make its contribution to the implementation of the Secretary-General's proposals.

Mr. Zaitsev (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): It has been quite a while now since the General Assembly entrusted this Committee with the important and noble task of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes. In so doing, the Assembly contemplated that the Committee would provide the framework for the elaboration of agreements embodying key principles relating to the use of outer space.

Moreover, criteria were established to govern the political, legal and moral aspects of activities carried out in space. Without exaggeration, these activities were of the utmost importance.

Obviously, to assign essentially new substantive goals to the Committee is no easy matter. Because of the widely differing points of view represented here, constructive ideas often get lost in the shuffle. What is more, in paying homage to the formal aspect of our work, we are imperceptibly acquiring the habit of avoiding substantive issues. Problems are not being resolved, and specific ideas and proposals are left hanging in the air.

It is no easy task to merge all points of view, but we can certainly agree on a position bringing together all the ideas and proposals. It would be logical to concentrate our efforts on individual questions that are ripe for solution, even if the solutions are not comprehensive: we can always proceed from the specific to the general.

In our view, the success of the Committee's work could be enhanced by improved contacts with the Geneva Conference on Disarmament. We are, of course, aware that some of our colleagues are antagonistic to the idea of establishing direct relations between the outer space Committee and the Conference on Disarmament. But we still feel that the Committee can feel secure that there could be constructive measures in this regard. It is vital that there be at least occasional exchanges of information with the Conference's ad hoc committee on matters of mutual interest. The advantages of such channels of communications are obvious: they would enable us to lend greater clarity to issues; we could achieve generally acceptable solutions; and our work would become more productive.

I would note that the Conference's ad hoc committee is itself seeking guidance and for rationalization of its activities. Yet the most promising aspect of its work involves the strengthening of measures to enhance confidence and predictability in space activities. We can relate this to the greater transparency of pre-launch

activities and to norms governing pre-orbit groupings, space systems and units, which function as astronautical "rules of the road".

Given the spirit of the times, the delegation of the Russian Federation wants our colleagues to have the opportunity to consider this matter; we should ask the Chairman to take what he views as the most effective measures to establish a useful relationship with the Conference. Recent discussions in the Conference on Disarmament have included the subjects of space debris and on-board nuclear power sources, both of which fall within the purview both of this Committee and of the Conference.

We hope, Mr. Chairman, that you and our other colleagues - many of them stating their active participation in discussions on ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes - will understand that the somewhat severe tone of my delegation's statements indicates our sincere interest in the Committee's success. We hope too that our constructive criticism will be of some help in finding a new path for our work.

Mr. El Ghernougui (Morocco) *(interpretation from Arabic):* The world community is now in a new era characterized by new global concerns. In the light of this situation, one feels more optimistic and hopes for a better future, and for a new, improved spirit that will expand and strengthen international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space and make possible completely transparent scientific and technological progress in that field. We are optimistic that there will be greater trust and increased cooperation among States in the use of outer space, with full regard for the safety and security of space travelers.

The question of maintaining space for peaceful purposes is inextricably linked to that of the use of space for non-peaceful purposes. Hence, transparency must be maintained. There must be good will, and safeguards for our common interest in peaceful uses of outer space and for the ever-growing needs of developing countries. Those countries must be given the assistance they need. Ways and means of promoting scientific and technical research on the peaceful uses of outer space must be enhanced.

We are aware of the Committee's important role in these areas, and of the role of the Conference on Disarmament with respect to monitoring and preventing an arms race in space. My delegation considers, therefore, that the Committee should positively and actively work with the Conference on Disarmament. The Committee should coordinate its activities with those of other bodies working in the field of arms limitation, without losing its special characteristics, which differ from those of any other United Nations body.

Moreover, Morocco considers that international outer space law must be revised. There must be international conventions to reflect our achievements to date in the area of science and technology relating to the peaceful uses of outer space. These should be based on the principle of respect for the sovereignty of States; they should be transparent; and they should enhance public awareness and confidence in all countries.

The delegation of Morocco feels that we cannot deal with this matter successfully unless we pay particular attention to questions of the safety and security of the outer space environment and that of human beings in that environment, which inevitably has an impact on the question of the maintenance of outer space for peaceful purposes. We must ensure that space is not militarized, and that it be protected from any nuclear accident or other event. We know that such accidents always have the same result: enormously increased danger, and danger for life on Earth. We must protect outer space from this; we must avoid collisions between satellites and nuclear power sources or space debris. This subject is becoming increasingly vital; the danger is growing. The international community has to be extremely cautious.

This new era in history is characterized by international cooperation, in contrast to the era of tension that we have just lived through. The delegation of Morocco feels that we are very close to reaping the benefits of the efforts that have been made in the past. We therefore believe that Member States - more specifically, States with the necessary technology for the use of outer space for peaceful purposes - should accord more importance to activities relating to the report of the Secretary-General on national and international research on ways to strengthen the safety and security of satellites equipped with nuclear power sources. This would enable us all to follow more closely any developments in this field and to benefit from the related scientific and technical progress.

We have to make more effort. We must continue to study the problems that may result from collisions between nuclear power sources and space debris, and we also need to study their nuclear and radiation implications. The Committee should be kept informed by Member States of their wishes in this respect.

We therefore invite the Committee once again to set up a working group to study in depth all matters relating to the use of nuclear power sources in space, as well as the dangers that would result from the collisions I mentioned.

Mr. Chandrasekhar (India): Our delegation would like to make a very brief statement on this agenda item, which has been under consideration by our Committee for several years now. Progress, however, has been extremely slow. The subject is of fundamental importance to the Committee. Hence, it is necessary to explore the possibilities of taking even small steps towards progress.

In the past, there have been a few areas in which the Committee was able to reach a common understanding on this subject. One of these relates to the strengthening of international cooperation in the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space. The other relates to reinforcing the Committee's role, including the further development of international space law. In the view of our delegation, several steps could be taken to broaden the common ground on which agreement has been reached in the Committee.

The Committee, while encouraging the use of a variety of means evolved over time to pursue international cooperation in bilateral, multilateral and other forms, could endeavour to strengthen those means in areas where there are gaps, particularly those involving common concerns of all mankind. They could include, to mention only a few such areas, concrete initiatives in space applications contributing to the protection of the earth's environment, natural disaster management and the eradication of illiteracy.

Appropriate international initiatives involving the use of space technology and including the widest possible participation of States could be studied, promoted and encouraged by the Committee. Also, the kind of voluntary cooperation which was orchestrated during the International Space Year could be enhanced and promoted through the Committee's efforts. Such measures for broadening and deepening international cooperation through international and regional programmes should be actively promoted and pursued by the Committee in an action-oriented manner, with time limits.

Central to the theme of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes is the need to preserve the outer space environment itself, so that access to it is assured for countries which have yet to make use of outer space for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of future generations. Crowding in certain parts of outer space by active spacecraft and debris has given rise to considerable concern. Hence, appropriate measures, including increased international cooperation for monitoring and tackling such problems, as well as the further development of legal norms, are important from the point of view of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes.

The Committee has been responsible for developing all major international agreements in the field of the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space in the past. It is pertinent to elicit the widest possible adhesion to these treaties, and our Committee should continue to pursue appropriate measures to promote additional membership.

In the context of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes, our delegation has always recognized that removing impediments to the peaceful uses of outer space is also important. There have been suggestions in the past in the Committee that it should play a complementary role to the Conference on Disarmament. Taking into account the work of the Committee in developing international law related to the peaceful uses of outer space, appropriate activities pertaining to transparency and confidence-building measures could be examined by the Committee.

Finally, we hope that the Committee will make further rapid progress on this matter, which has been mandated as a priority item by the General Assembly.

Organization of work

The Chairman: Tomorrow at 10 a.m. sharp we shall continue our discussion of agenda item 4 and begin our consideration of agenda item 5, "Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the work of its thirty-first session." In accordance with past practice, we will consider this item jointly with agenda item 7, "Implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space". Delegations wishing to speak on either of those items may do so in the time allotted to their consideration. I would urge all delegations wishing to speak on those items to inscribe their names on the list of speakers as soon as possible.

As was discussed at our opening meeting, and in accordance with the requests of several delegations, there will be an informal meeting of the Committee on Friday afternoon in the form of open-ended consultations to discuss matters related to the working methods of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, specifically the Legal Subcommittee, and including also the proposals made by several delegations.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.